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MEMORANDUM FOR : Director, National Reconnaissance Office
SUBJECT : Itex M-2 Proposal

1. I propose that approval be given to various contractors to proceed on a partial basis with the M-2 system so that lead times will be protected. This would involve the following:

a. Itex to fabricate a sample lot of 1 meter focal length lenses, design and build a working model of the zero tension film transport and related miscellaneous activities. Cost estimate

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b. LMSC to accomplish certain design work, construct mock-ups, etc. Cost estimate

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c. General Electric to make studies of modifications to present recovery systems to accommodate M-2. Cost to be determined.

d. Itex to perform certain design work and equipment commitments relating to a test facility adequate for the M-2 system. Exact work and costs to be negotiated.

e. LMSC to proceed with work on items intended to improve Agena stability. Exact work and costs to be negotiated if not already done.

2. My reason for this recommendation is that I believe this system, if perfected, offers a substantial improvement in quality and certain operational advantages. If no actions of this limited scope are taken now, considerable time may be lost in waiting for the TAT, on which this and so much else depends, to be demonstrated.

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3. If you agree I will proceed immediately on the first four items above. In regard to recovery system changes, a similar study on behalf of the Spartan version of K-6 may be worthwhile if not already in hand.

4. Since the fifth item is of broader application than merely K-2 and since it is a "white" activity, I would merely ask that K-2 parameters be included in your definition of the scope of activity. I include this item because I understand that current effort on Agena improvement is limited to weight reduction and thrust augmentation.

5. While very substantial improvements were claimed in Agena stability for 1164, unfortunately, this test was not successful. To exploit systems of improved quality over MURAL better stability than is claimed for that system is mandatory. The extent of expected improvement with Agena 1164 and thereafter is so large and since this has not yet been demonstrated I have some reservations about these expectations being realized with the measures already taken. Therefore, I would urge that further measures continue to be studied for the present.

6. The above program covers a three month period; immediately thereafter a review would be in order to decide on continuance or stoppage. I would expect to be able to report more completely on costs for this three month program in about ten days after receiving your agreement in principle.

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

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*not signed but
given informally
to DN Row 27 March*

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Eugene P. Kiefer/TAES/OSA:hmj (20 March 1963)

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